

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 124270
ORIGIN AF-03

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:GWSCOTT:CJ

APPROVED BY AF/E:JWHITING

-----290543Z 113992 /14

R 280234Z MAY 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 124270

FOL REPEAT PARIS 15290 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 25 MAY.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 15290

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR US

SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS WITH FRENCH ON HORN OF AFRICA

REF: (A) STATE 107685; (B) STATE 102503;

(C) STATE 92304

1. WE HAD OPPORTUNITY DURING A MEETING WITH ASSISTANT
TO THE QUAI DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, CLAUDE HAREL,
TO MAKE MOST OF THE POINTS IN REFS B AND C THAT HAD NOT
BEEN COVERED ALREADY IN OUR ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS OF THE
AREA. HAREL HAD TO LEAVE THE MEETING EARLY, BUT NOT
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BEFORE GIVING A CATEGORIC REACTION TO THE SUGGESTION
ABOUT EVENTUAL SALES OF FRENCH ARMS TO SOMALIA (REF B).
HAREL SAID THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR FRANCE TO
MAINTAIN A BALANCED POLICY BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA
AND THAT ARMS SALES TO EITHER SIDE WOULD UPSET THAT
BALANCE. THUS FRANCE WOULD NOT CONSIDER SELLING ARMS
TO SOMALIA.

2. HAREL AGREED ENTIRELY WITH THE DESIRABILITY OF TRYING TO IMPROVE US AND OTHER WESTERN RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA AND OF ATTEMPTING TO REDUCE SOVIET INFLUENCE THERE. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IT STILL IS NOT CLEAR THAT SIAD BARRE WANTS TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION AND THAT EVEN WERE HE TO SO DESIRE, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RULING COUNCIL MIGHT PREVENT CHANGE. MOREOVER, HAREL SPECULATED, AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT A CONTINUED SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA IS USEFUL SINCE SO LONG AS THE SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO BALANCE THEIR RELATIONS BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, THEY ARE APT TO CONTINUE TO DISCOURAGE ETHIOPIAN (AND SOMALI) ADVENTURISM IN DJIBOUTI OR ELSEWHERE.

3. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, GENERAL MERY, CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF, TOLD POLCON THAT THE NEW DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT HAS INDICATED THAT ONE OF ITS FIRST ACTS MAY BE THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE ADDIS-DJIBOUTI RAILWAY, AN ACT WHICH THE FRENCH BELIEVE WOULD PROVOKE IMMEDIATE ETHIOPIAN INTERVENTION. THE FRENCH ARE TRYING TO KILL THE PROPOSAL.
GAMMON

UNQUOTE VANCE

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NNN

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